

VZCZCXRO4893
PP RUEHLMC
DE RUEHLP #2726/01 2832057
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
P 102057Z OCT 06
FM AMEMBASSY LA PAZ
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 0826
INFO RUEHAC/AMEMBASSY ASUNCION 6169
RUEHBO/AMEMBASSY BOGOTA 3483
RUEHBR/AMEMBASSY BRASILIA 7344
RUEHBU/AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES 4606
RUEHCV/AMEMBASSY CARACAS 1860
RUEHPE/AMEMBASSY LIMA 1901
RUEHMN/AMEMBASSY MONTEVIDEO 4070
RUEHQT/AMEMBASSY QUITO 4496
RUEHSG/AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO 9071
RHMFISS/HQ USSOUTHCOM MIAMI FL
RUMIAAA/USCINCSO MIAMI FL
RUEHLMC/MILLENNIUM CHALLENGE CORP
RHEBAAA/DEPT OF ENERGY WASHINGTON DC
RUEATRS/DEPT OF TREASURY WASHINGTON DC
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHINGTON DC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 LA PAZ 002726

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 10/11/2016

TAGS: [SNAR](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [BL](#)

SUBJECT: VENEZUELAN AMBASSADOR PLEDGES DEFENSE OF GOB; GOV
FRUSTRATED WITH MORALES?

REF: A. LA PAZ 2637

[1](#)B. LA PAZ 2647

Classified By: Ambassador Philip S. Goldberg for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)
) .

Summary

[1](#)1. (C) Summary: President Morales convoked cocaleros of the Chapare October 7 to publicly demonstrate against the U.S.'s hedged certification of Bolivia on counternarcotics and to defend his coca policies. Standing at President Morales' side, Venezuelan Ambassador Julio Montes pledged to defend Bolivia's revolution with Venezuelan "blood and lives" against all who would "threaten" the "beautiful Bolivian revolution." Morales' own discourse was more moderate than usual, although his intent was apparently to shore up cocalero support by throwing an anti-American bash following his decision to go after the Carrasco National Park cocaleros. While domestic response to the outspoken Venezuelan remarks has been muted, an opposition senator will introduce a bill asking the foreign ministry to declare the Venezuelan "persona non grata" for his interference in Bolivia's internal affairs. While this bill will likely find little traction, the Venezuelan ambassador's comments may well reflect Venezuelan exasperation with Morales' failure to keep his political footing during recent crises with cocaleros, miners, and now the public transport unions. As one opposition-oriented analyst told us October 10: "President Morales came in promising the people he would be Nelson Mandela and cure us of our racist past; all that is over now. Now he is just trying to survive." While this comment reflects opposition optimism, it illustrates a sense in Bolivia among experienced observers that the political dynamic is shifting away from President Morales and his MAS party. End summary.

Venezuelan Blood for GOB --
Bolivian Coca for Venezuela

¶2. (SBU) President Morales convoked cocaleros of the Chapare October 7 for an anti-American rally in Shinahota to publicly reject the U.S. decision to certify Bolivia on counternarcotics with a six month review and to defend the "cato" of coca (septel). Morales said "they (the Americans) can't interfere in the internal affairs of Bolivia." He said "again the U.S. government sets conditions... our fight now is together-- government and cocaleros--to tell (the United States) there won't be zero coca in the six federations of the tropico of Cochabamba, cato of coca or death. Together we're going to defend, organized, unified, against those interests they want to impose."

¶3. (SBU) Morales invited the Venezuelan ambassador to Bolivia, Julio Montes, to accompany him, and shared the lectern with the other speakers who also engaged in anti-American rhetoric and violent discourse. The Venezuelan ambassador, who was featured prominently, declared "if for some reason the beautiful Bolivian revolution were threatened, and Bolivians asked for our blood and our lives, we will be there." Morales also announced that Venezuela will invest USD 500,000 to open a plant in the Chapare to industrialize coca, and Montes promised that Venezuelan will be a prime market for industrialized coca.

GOV Defending Bolivia
Against what Enemies?

¶4. (C) On October 9, the press reported that opposition Podemos Senator Oscar Ortiz will introduce a bill in the

LA PAZ 00002726 002 OF 002

senate asking the foreign ministry to declare the Venezuelan ambassador "persona non grata" for his interference in internal Bolivian affairs. Ortiz told poloff October 10 that Podemos believes Montes' statements constitute unwanted interference in an internal Bolivian conflict, as do his previous statements urging the constituent assembly to declare itself "plenipotentiary." Ortiz said the senate resolution, which must be passed by simple majority, would urge the ministry of foreign affairs to declare Montes persona non grata. While as of this writing it is unclear how much traction this resolution will gain, the opposition believes that it is important to keep Venezuelan meddling in the public eye. (NOTE: We are reporting septel on Venezuelan-Bolivian military cooperation. END NOTE).

¶5. (C) More specifically, Senator Ortiz told us October 10 that he believes the Venezuelan ambassador's comments were aimed squarely at the opposition, and not against any potential non-Bolivian "enemies of the revolution." We asked Ortiz what the opposition's strategy was in light of recent Morales' missteps with the miners, confrontations with competing cocaleros, and troubles with transportation unions.

(A national transport strike is threatened for later this week, in addition to the strike which already paralyzed La Paz on October 9th.) While Ortiz lamented that opposition weakness has left it unable to put a national leader up against the MAS, he expressed satisfaction that President Morales is generating enough opposition due to his own confrontational and exclusivist style that the opposition can afford to remain passive for the time being.

Comment: Venezuelans Fear
Client May be Crumbling?

¶6. (C) Comment: Evo Morales has had a tough news week, but his popularity remains high with his base and he knows how to strike a chord with the elements that comprise it, as he demonstrated at the anti-American rally for his Chapare cocalero supporters over the weekend. That being said,

certain union and cooperativist workers previously in Morales' corner are now turning against him and his government. Venezuelan diplomatic hamfistedness is of course nothing new in this hemisphere or elsewhere. Nonetheless, the Venezuelan ambassador's comments may well reflect Venezuelan exasperation with Morales' failure to keep his political footing in the light of recent crises with cocaleros, miners, and now the transport unions. As one opposition-oriented analyst told us October 10; "President Morales came in promising the people he would be Nelson Mandela and cure us of our racist past; all that is over now.

Now he is just trying to survive." The Venezuelan ambassador's public endorsement of the Morales' administration underscores just how closely this GOB is associated with the GOV, and arguably just how worried the Venezuelans are that the situation is slipping out of President Morales' control. There is a sense in Bolivia among experienced political observers that the political dynamic is shifting away from President Morales and his MAS party. End comment.
GOLDBERG